THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d) Recently, in some of the cases investigated by the customs authorities, it appeared that the returning Non Resident Indians have been used to carry gold for a consideration in terms of air-fare and/or cash compensation. The liberalised Gold Import Scheme introduced in 1992 was reviewed in 1994 so as to permit extension of the facility of gold import upto 15 days after the arrival of the passenger as also imports through MMTC and SBI for delivery of such gold in India to the returning NRIs.

The main objectives of the liberalised Gold Import Scheme, interalia, were to encourage the import of gold through licit channels against payment of customs duty in foreign exchange and to discourage smuggling of gold. It has been reported that the introduction of this Scheme has had a healthy impact on checking clandestine imports of gold. At present, there is no proposal before the Government to review this Scheme.

Setting up of T.V. Centres in North Eastern Region

373. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether some T.V. Centres are being set up in North Eastern Region in general and Assam in particular;

(b) if so, details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) to (c) While 40 TV transmitters of varying power are presently under implementation in the North Eastern region, 19 more transmitter projects, including 3 HPTs, 3 LPTs and one Transposer in Assam, are envisaged to be set up in the region subject to availability of resources and infrastructural facilities.

Allocation for repair, maintenance and modernisation of airports

374. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the allocation made during the current financial year for repair, maintenance and modernisation of each airport;

(b) the allocation made for the same purposes during the last three years;

(c) whether funds have also been made available for some of the airports for upgradation;

(d) if so, the status of work relating to maintenance, repairing, construction, upgradation and modernisation; and

(e) airport-wise details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

News Item under the Caption "India is not among top 20 Tourist attractions"

375. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:
SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item appeared in the Times of India dated 9th October, 1996 under the caption "India is not among top 20 tourist attractions";

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to take/have taken any steps to attract more tourist by providing more facilities and relevant inforamtion regarding the position of law and order and such other information;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, what other special steps Government propose to take to attract more tourists?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. According to the World Tourism Organisation preliminary results for the year 1995, India does not figure among the top 20 tourist destinations. The top 20 tourist destinations as per their ranks are France, Spain, United States, Italy, China, United Kingdom, Hungary, Mexico, Poland, Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Switzerland, Greece, Hong Kong, Portugal, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

(c) to (e) The Government is making continuous efforts to attract more foreign tourists to the country through improvement of infrastructural facilities, strengthening of publicity and marketing efforts in the overseas markets and development of human resources for the sector. Steps taken to promote tourism overseas, include advertising through print and electronic media, printing and distribution of publicity material, extending support to tour operators & travel agents, promoting air charters for tourists, participation in fairs and festivals, promoting through direct mail and highlighting the tourist attractions of the country through films, audio-visuals, posters, multivision presentation.

"शेषन ब्लेम्स सेन्टर फॉर आई-कार्ड डिले" शीर्षक के अंतर्गत प्रकाशित समाचार

376. **श्री राम जेठमलानी:** क्या विधि और न्याय मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार का ध्यान दिनांक 9 सितंबर, 1996 के 'दि टाइम्स ऑफ इंडिया' में "शेषन ब्लेम्स सेन्टर फॉर आई-कार्ड डिले" शीर्षक से प्रकाशित समाचार की ओर दिलाया गया है; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस पर सरकार की क्या प्रतिक्रिया है?

विधि और न्याय मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री रमाकांत डी० खलप): (क) जी हां।

(ख) निर्वाचन आयोग ने अभी तक सरकारी तौर पर ऐसा कोई विचार व्यक्त नहीं किया है। इसलिए सरकार उक्त समाचार के संबंध में प्रतिक्रिया करना समुचित नहीं समझती है।

Utilization of Allocated amount for National Health Programme by A.P Government

377. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Andhra Pradesh Government is implementing National Health Programme relating to mother and child health immunisation and family planning;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there are 1361 public health centres out of which 666 require construction of building for their functioning;

(c) if so, whether State Government has urged the Central Government to provide funds for construction of 300 PHCs to complete the project;

(d) what is the total allocation made by Central Government and the amount utilised by State Government; and

(e) the total allocation made during 1996-97 for this purpose by the Centre?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) As per information sent by the State Government upto 30.6.96, 736 Primary Health Centres require construction of building. However, no specific proposal for construction of 300 Primary Health Centre has been received in the Ministry.

(d) and (e) Does not arise.